

government fulfills the requirements of the so-called Quartet Statement. It also suspends U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority until the administration completes its review of the entire assistance program.

To be clear, this provision will not halt, nor should it halt, humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. We can and we must hold the elected leadership in the Palestinian territories to account for their messages of violence. But we should not punish the people of the territories for asserting themselves peacefully and democratically against corruption in their quest for a better life.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this supplemental. The foreign operations funding contained in Chapter 3 has been scrubbed so that only emergency requirements remain, and that is \$140 million reduction from the President's request.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, last year Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma dealt a triple blow to the residents of my district. Florida's commercial fishermen were among the hardest hit, yet these small business owners did not receive any special disaster assistance from last year's Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Bill and minimal aid from other Federal agencies. Both their livelihoods and the future of this important industry are threatened. That is why I am requesting the gentleman's help in securing the necessary resources to assist these hard-working men and women.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I am certainly aware of the devastating impact of last year's hurricane season, and you have my assurances that I will work with you and do everything I can to address this issue when we go to conference with the Senate on this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your bringing this important legislation to the floor. I will include for the RECORD a letter I recently received from several elected officials from my district which explains in great detail the devastation Hurricane Rita inflicted on Southwest Louisiana and the need for Federal support in its aftermath.

The Nation suffers from Rita amnesia, because the residents of Southwest Louisiana did everything right. We heeded the Federal warnings, evacuated before the storm, saving thousand of lives in the process. In fact, there were no deaths after Rita.

We returned after the storm and immediately got to work to begin the

long process of rebuilding our communities and restoring our way of life. The FEMA Long Term Community Recovery Team has said that Southwest Louisiana is leading the State in the recovery effort.

Southwest Louisiana is not looking for a Federal handout, but we need the Nation's help to recover from this unprecedented storm. Debris removal has been slow. 5.73 million cubic yards so far has been collected, enough to cover a football field with a pile of debris 1 mile high. Homes are now destroyed or uninhabitable. And, in fact, in Cameron Parish, 90 percent of the homes were reduced to slabs of concrete. Industries are hurting. The Lake Area Industry Alliance, home to a vast petrochemical complex which serves the entire U.S., reports damages to its facilities of nearly \$50 million; and that is just one example.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot ignore the plight of Southwest Louisiana, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Remember Rita. I yield back.

CITY OF LAKE CHARLES,
March 11, 2006.

Re Hurricane Rita Recovery in Southwest Louisiana.

HON. CHARLES BOUSTANY,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BOUSTANY: First and foremost, we from Southwest Louisiana want to thank you for your support in our efforts to recover from Hurricane Rita. You have been very vocal in your effort to help us and we sincerely appreciate it. This letter is intended to give you information to support your efforts and to remind you that we stand ready to work with you in this effort. However, it has become very evident that others in our nation's capitol have forgotten about the destruction that occurred as a result of that storm.

We are not asking them to take our word for it. Just this week Governor Rick Perry testified in Washington D.C. and according to AP wire reports he requested that Texas be given \$2 billion dollars, because "states slammed by Katrina are getting more generous help than his state, which bore the brunt of Hurricane Rita." Governor Perry's significant funding request indicates his belief that Hurricane Rita was a destructive storm.

We do not intend to compete with our Texas neighbors for recovery money. We acknowledge that Hurricane Rita inflicted serious damage on Southeast Texas. But Southwest Louisiana also suffered significant devastation from this storm as well. The eye of the storm made landfall in Cameron Parish on September 24. The highly destructive northeast quadrant of the storm (with its winds and storm surge) was most destructive in Cameron Parish and in Calcasieu Parish in Louisiana. Cameron Parish as we knew it no longer exists. We, as Governor Perry, are concerned that we run the risk of being overshadowed by Hurricane Katrina when it comes time to allocate limited resources to the recovery effort.

Southwest Louisiana's elected officials, emergency responders and citizens worked hard to take the initiative to comply with evacuation orders, maintain discipline after the storm and truly prioritize our needs in a professional manner. Included below for your review is an overview of what happened in Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes during the Katrina and Rita storms. Hopefully this in-

formation will help you and your staff in your efforts to prevent Congress and the federal agencies responsible for hurricane relief from forgetting the devastation that occurred across the coastal parishes of Louisiana and in Southwest Louisiana in particular.

Hurricane Katrina also impacted Southwest Louisiana. Calcasieu Parish alone welcomed approximately 20,000 evacuees from Hurricane Katrina by opening shelters at a cost of nearly \$1 million. The support of our community for the evacuees was overwhelming. Food, clothing, money and time were donated. Businesses and residents offered shelter, entertainment and support. The Lake Charles American Press described the effort as our community's finest hour. When Hurricane Rita approached our area, the first concern was to evacuate these people to safety.

When Hurricane Rita passed through Southwest Louisiana, our citizens listened to officials and heeded warnings to evacuate. Residents of Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes left the area on heavily congested roadways to the north along with residents of Texas who had already been given an order to evacuate. Gas supplies were limited and hotels to the north were full with evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, many who had evacuated a second time to escape Hurricane Rita.

Residents of Calcasieu Parish began returning to the area after the storm starting September 30, to "look and leave". They returned to find over 19,000 homes or approximately 25 percent of the housing stock was destroyed. Another 35 percent of the housing was damaged. Power was out throughout most of the area for one to three weeks causing widespread loss of water and sewer systems and shuttering industry and retail businesses. Gasoline was a rare commodity. Approximately half of the trees in Calcasieu Parish were destroyed or damaged.

Industries and public facilities were also heavily damaged. Lake Charles Regional Airport suffered over \$20 million in damage including the passenger terminal, which was damaged beyond repair. The facility was closed approximately fifteen days after the storm. Chennault International Airport, home to Northrop Grumman, suffered approximately \$40 million in damages and was closed for four weeks after the storm. Damages to other aviation industry businesses brought the estimated damage to our aviation industry to approximately \$90 million.

The Lake Area Industry Alliance, home of a vast petrochemical complex important to the entire United States, reported damages of approximately \$50 million to their members' facilities. Damage to off-shore rigs and the closure of the Port of Lake Charles (the nation's 12th largest port) caused supply disruptions to production facilities. Supply disruptions and power outages resulted in loss of production, worker layoffs and additional startup costs. Lyondell Chemical Company closed its facility, costing the community 295 well paying jobs with benefits; it will be impossible to replace this facility.

The six casinos of our gaming industry were shut down during the power outage. Harrah's two riverboat casinos and hotel were damaged beyond repair. Harrah's facility is currently closed; our community has lost 2,000 jobs as a result.

McNeese State University and SOWELA Technical College sustained extensive damage. The Calcasieu Parish School System experienced heavy damage to school facilities and closure of all public schools for approximately four weeks. Damage to education facilities is estimated at \$57 million.

The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury and area municipalities suffered damages to facilities of approximately \$30 million. The parish